

Amendments to the Specification

At the top of page 1, first line, please insert:

Related Application

This application is a Divisional application claiming benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 121 of U.S. Non-Provisional Application No. 10/251,552, filed September 19, 2002.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 9, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The configuration of the coupling tabs ~~220 320~~ and coupling notches ~~222 322~~ is provided to suit the particular purpose for a secure but removable coupling engagement there-between. Depending on the shape of the locking feature 224 and the resiliency of the arm 225, the assembled modules 112 can be decoupled, such as by pulling or twisting apart two adjacent modules 112. For example, but not limited thereto, a locking feature 224 in the form a double-sloped wedge, i.e., a wedge having two oppositely facing slopes, wherein the arm 225 is adapted to deflect upon assembly and deflect again upon disassembly. Another method of disassembly includes, but is not limited to, the use of a tool to pry the arms 225 out of engagement.

Referring again to Figure 1B, a top view of the first end contact housing 130a is shown in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The first end contact housing 130a comprises a top side 210a, a bottom side 214a (hidden in this view), a first side ~~212a 212~~, and a second side 216a. Although the terms "top," "bottom," and "side" are used, the terms are merely used to describe the various features of the first end contact housing 130a, and are not intended to limit the orientation of the first end contact housing 130a in any manner. In one embodiment, the top side 210a, the bottom side 214a, and the second side 216a are all generally flat; that is, they do not comprise any coupling elements. In another embodiment, the top side 210a, the bottom side 214a, and the second side 216a are curvilinear forming one merged rounded side. In another embodiment, the top side 210a, the bottom side 214a, and the second side 216a have other profiles suitable for insertion into a structural cavity during installation for a specific installation.

The first side 212a ~~212~~ comprises engaging coupling tabs 220 and coupling notches 222 of the same form and type as the first side 212c ~~212~~ of the center contact housing 130c. Therefore, the first side 212a,c ~~212~~ of the first end and center contact housings 130a,c are adapted to engage with the second side 216b,c ~~216~~ of the second end and center contact housings 130b,c.

Referring again to Figure 1B, a top view of the second end contact housing 130b is shown in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. In similar, but complementary form as the first end contact housing 130a, the second end contact housing 112b comprises a top side surface 210b, a bottom side surface 214b (hidden in this view), a first side ~~surface~~ 212b, and a second side ~~surface~~ 216a ~~216~~. Although the terms "top," "bottom," and "side" are used, the terms are merely used to describe the various features of the second end contact housing 130b, and are not intended to limit the orientation of the second end contact housing 130b in any manner. In one embodiment, the top side 210b, the bottom side 214b, and the first side 212b are all generally flat; that is, they do not comprise any coupling elements. In another embodiment, the top side 210b, the bottom side 214b, and the first side 212b are curvilinear forming one merged rounded side. In another embodiment, the top side 210b, the bottom side 214b, and the first side 212b have other profiles suitable for insertion into a body structure during installation for a specific installation.

The second side 216b ~~216~~ comprises engaging coupling tabs 220 and coupling notches 222 of the same form and type as the second side 216c ~~216~~ of the center contact housing 130c. Therefore, the second side 216b,c ~~216~~ of the second end and center contact housings 130b,c are adapted to engage with the first side 212a,b ~~212~~ of the first end and center contact housings 130a,c.

Referring again to Figures 1A-C, the passive contact assembly 150 has substantially the same form and function as the active contact assembly 110, but for the integration of the passive contact 154 in place of the active contact 114. In one embodiment in accordance with the present invention, the first end, second end, and center active and passive contact modules 112a-c, 152a-c ~~112, 152~~ comprise the same contact housings 130a-c; the incorporation of an active contact 114 or passive contact 154 being the differentiating element.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 11, line 4, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Referring again to Figures 1B-C and 2A, the front side 122 of the first, second and center contact housings 130a-c comprise a first, second and center flange 126a-c. A portion of the first, second and center flange 126a-c extending away from the top sides 210a-c and bottom sides 214a-c further comprises a passive contact aperture 153 in the form of a slot. The passive contact aperture 153 extends through the first, second and center flange 126a-c adjacent to and parallel with the top 210a-c and bottom sides 214a-c, respectively.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 11, line 26, with the following rewritten paragraph:

It is understood that other means for the secure and tight assembly of the passive contact 154 to the contact housing 130a-c are within the scope of the invention. Other means for the secure and tight assembly of the passive contact 154 to the contact housing 130a-c include, but are not limited to, crimping or swaging the legs 155 after assembly, retention clips assembled on the legs 154, 155 adjacent the back surface 226, a clip on the top and/or bottom sides 210, 214 engaging an aperture in one or both legs ~~154, 155, 157~~ and a wedge-shaped bump on the top and/or bottom sides 210, 214 engaging an aperture in one or both legs ~~154, 155, 157~~.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 12, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The above description presented the contact assemblies 110, 150 comprising three distinct contact housings 130a-c having at least one of two distinct first and second mating sides 212a-c, 216a-c ~~212, 216~~ for removable engagement. This provides a description in a more general sense. It is recognized, though, that the contact housings 130a-c in the embodiment of Figure 2 present a more specific embodiment with unique features. It is recognized that the first side 212 is actually the second side 216 wherein the housing 130 is rotated 180 degrees. Further, it is recognized that the first end housing 130a with a first side 212a ~~212~~ is actually the second end housing 130b with a second side 216b ~~216~~ wherein the first housing 130a is rotated 180 degrees. Therefore, the embodiment of Figure 2 comprises two distinct types of housings; that

is, a center housing 130c and an end housing 130a. Thus, the advantages of the embodiment of Figure 2 further includes the further reduction of parts inventory.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 13, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Figures 4A and 4B are top and perspective views of contact modules 430a-c, as assembled and individually, respectively, having a coupling feature 420 in the form of a tongue 422 and groove 423, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. The tongue 422 and groove 423 are adapted to closely nest together in sliding engagement. A detent ridge 424 on the tongue 422 is adapted to click into a detent trough 425 to securely but removably couple the contact modules 430a-c 430 together such that the tongue 424 and groove 423 do not slidingly disengage.

Figure 4C is a perspective view of contact modules 460c having a coupling feature 440 in the form of a protruding male feature 442 and socket female feature 443, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. The male and female features 442, 443 are adapted to closely nest together in sliding engagement. In yet another embodiment, a detent ridge 444 on the male feature 442 is adapted to click into a detent trough 445 on the female feature 443 to securely but removably couple the contact modules 460c 460 together such that the male and female features 442, 443 do not slidingly disengage.

Figure 4D is a perspective view of center contact modules 461c having a coupling feature 441 in the form of a tongue 446 and groove 447, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. The tongue and groove features 446, 447 are adapted to closely nest together in sliding engagement. The tongue and groove features 446, 447 extend a predetermined distance from the front side 122 towards the back side 124 defining a stop 451. The stop 451 is adapted to stop the sliding engagement at a position that aligns the front sides 122 in coplanar relationship. In yet another embodiment, a detent ridge 448 on the tongue feature 446 is adapted to click into a detent trough 449 on the groove feature 447 to securely but removably couple the contact modules 461c 461 together such that the tongue and groove features 446, 446 do not slidingly disengage in the opposite direction.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 14, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional view of a passive modular contact assembly 500 in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. First, second and center contact housings 530a-c are again the same whether used for ~~either the active or~~ passive contact modules 512, 552 or as active contact modules (not shown). The contact housings 530a-c are substantially similar to the contact housings 130a-c previously described, except for the absence of the passive contact apertures 153 and the addition of a passive contact head cup 523. The passive contact head cup 523 does not interfere with the operation of the active contact (not shown) 514 which operates in substantially the same way as the active contact 114 previously described.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 14, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In another embodiment in accordance with the invention, the modular contact switch comprises two active contact assemblies 110. In some installations it is advantageous to have spring-loaded contacts on both sides of the switch, as will be discussed below.

In another embodiment in accordance with the present invention, a one-circuit contact switch is provided comprising two one-circuit contact assemblies. The one-circuit contact assemblies comprise two end modules, wherein one module has the requisite contacts, and the other does not have a contact therein. In another embodiment, a "blank" module is provided; that is, a module having a solid front surface with neither the active nor passive contact apertures. The solid front surface provides an aesthetically ~~athletically~~-pleasing appearance. In addition, blank modules may be provided to installations for future circuit expansion.